

Miscellaneous.

PROJECTED WORKS.—Advertisements have been issued for tenders, by 20th July, for the erection of the Durham new County Infirmary; by a time not specified, for the reconstruction of the roof of St. Paul's Church, Bedford; and for relaying roof of same with lead; by 18th, for piling and timber-work and repairs to stations, &c. on Brighton and South Coast Railway; by 17th, for repairing two streets at Wapping; by 12th, for a supply of 1,000 tons of granite lumps for Poplar Union; by 10th, for the boiler and cooking-apparatus for the Kensington new workhouse; by 13th, for 100 iron bedsteads for same; and by 18th, for paving, granite, and gravel, &c., for St. Mary, Newington, Surrey.

DRAINAGE OF CARDIFF.—In our journal of the 3rd of June, a rate-payer of Cardiff asked our opinion as to the efficiency of a mode of drainage determined on for the workhouse of that town. Since then we have received additional information on the subject, and additional pressing for a reply; and though we do not feel bound to answer such inquiries, knowing that we might, without having much fuller information than is usually sent us, commit injustice or compromise ourselves, we will say, that although the pipe is small, there seems reason to believe that the arrangement proposed will be found sufficient for the purpose.

LIVERPOOL ARCHITECTURAL SOCIETY.—The new association took, last week, the first of a series of archaeological excursions,—the ancient church of Bebington, on the other side of the river, being the point of rendezvous determined on. The weather was unpropitious, but the ardour of the members brought a respectable, and, for the weather, numerous gathering, at the appointed place. Bebington Church is interesting to the architect and antiquary, from its containing, in spite of modern alteration, specimens of every style of mediæval art, from the Early Norman to the Late Perpendicular. The weather confined the visitors to the investigation of the interior. Sketch books, measuring-lines, and ladders were in requisition, and the company, divided into parties, delineated every portion of the building possessing claim to be recorded. Amongst the professional members present were Messrs. J. A. Picton, A. Holme, C. Reed, George Williams, Horner, Kūpin, Culshaw, Gee, Barry, Brown, and others. At the first meeting of the society in the ensuing session (in the first week of October), it is proposed that the drawings shall be exhibited, and a paper read on the history and antiquities of the church in question.

DILATORY GLEANINGS FROM THE ENGINEERING HARVEST.—In a late sitting at *Nisi Prius*—*tamen tempore*—re Albano v. Duke, an engineer sought to recover the sum of 3,321*l.* odd, on account of services, at the rate of 10*l.* 10*s.* per diem, in surveying a projected "Oxford, Witney, Cheltenham, and Gloucester Independent Railway," with an extension line from the same (all on paper merely) for which services it appears that the defendant, Sir James Duke, a provisional committee-man, was deemed by the plaintiff, Mr. Albano, responsible, as "monarch of all he surveyed." An additional sum of 1,300*l.* odd, the amount of a bill, was also libelled on, but "could be a matter of no dispute, for it was a sum admitted by the provisional committee to be due," inasmuch as, "after the failure of the project, and at a meeting of the shareholders, that committee represented that a balance of the deposits, amounting to 6*s.* 8*d.* (a very important sum in the eyes of a lawyer, at least) remained, which would be required to meet the engineer's bill, amounting to 1,300*l.*" Mr. I. K. Brunel gave evidence that, taking into account the great demand for engineers in 1845, the sum of ten guineas a day was certainly not too much. The expense of surveying, he added, on cross-examination, might average from 80*l.* to 100*l.* per mile. 80*l.* is a low price. 150*l.* is higher than the average, but he has known the cost to exceed 160*l.* Plaintiff and defendant, however, ultimately decided on their own verdict, to be taken on behalf of the plaintiff for 500*l.*, the defendant at the same time stating that he did not consider himself liable for that sum. Verdict accordingly—damages 500*l.*

BEARD'S DAGUERRETYPE PORTRAITS.—Daguerreotype portraiture is still a mystery and a marvel: the results of the action of light on surfaces chemically prepared are made more and more evident to our senses by the efforts of manipulators; but, so far from bringing us nearer to a clear understanding of the process, serve, in many cases, to contradict our previous views, without supplying new ones. None of the mysteries of religion at which sceptics laugh "because they are contrary to reason"—their reason—are so irreconcilable with our ignorance, so apparently impossible, as results which are now every day before us. Just think of this fact, for example, that a ray of light of a violet colour, falling upon a common sewing-needle, will convert it into a magnet! Who can understand it? We know little or nothing about light. The improvements which Mr. Beard has made in the process by which portraits are produced, at his establishments in King William-street, City, and the Polytechnic Institution, result from an entirely different treatment of the plate from what previous knowledge would have suggested. The effect, with which alone we are able to deal, is greatly improved; white and its modifications are more perfectly produced than was formerly the case, and that, too, without lessening the force and depths of the blacks, which was all the difficulty; the colouring, too, is less superficial, more a part of the plate than it was, rendering many of the recent specimens which we have had an opportunity of examining perfectly life-like and beautiful.

THE RATING OF MECHANICS' INSTITUTES.—Mr. Hutt, M.P., says, in a letter of the 23rd ult.,—"The Attorney-General communicated to me this morning that the Bill which he had introduced, by which the buildings of literary and scientific societies would be brought under the tax-gatherer, would be abandoned and withdrawn." It is only due to the Attorney-General to add, that the obnoxious clause, against which the committee of the Gatehead Institute petitioned, formed no part of the original Bill, but was thrust into it in committee.

HOLBORN HILL.—A design is at present under consideration of the Committee for City Improvements, for widening Skinner-street, taking down the houses from Farringdon-street to Shoe-lane, setting back the church-yard, &c., and on the space thus provided, erecting a viaduct over the hollow from Hatton Garden to Sea Coal-lane, with carriage-way, 20 feet high and 24 feet wide, and a flight of steps for foot passengers at the corner of Farringdon and Skinner streets. The demolition of the houses from Field-lane to Victoria-street, now effected, and the destruction of two of the old and ruinous houses between Shoe-lane and Farringdon-street by fire, together with the half untenanted, static of the north side of Skinner-street, afford a singularly favourable conjuncture for the accomplishment of some such scheme.

THE MARINE GLUE.—Mr. Jeffrey, the patentee, who is said to have sacrificed his prospect of public support for the last six years to exclusive exertions in order to render his marine glue available to the British navy, appears to have reaped the ordinary reward of Government benefactors, namely, the consciousness of having made himself useful, enhanced by "the most flattering and disinterested testimonials" from influential parties, together with the most ample acknowledgments and hopeful promises from parties still more influential. In place of a remuneration equivalent to the admitted benefit and the permanent saving yielded and to be yielded to the country by the adoption of a glue admitted to be of "great durability," the Admiralty have had the penny wise wisdom to offer the patentee, as their ultimatum, virtually a premium on its adulteration, or a powerful inducement to deprive it of at least "a little" of its "great durability," in the shape of "a price per ton for the quantity used,"—an offer equally munificent as wise, if Government wish to tempt the patentee to remunerate himself by lowering the intrinsic worth of the article and its economical value in the public service, but certainly not otherwise, since, "from its great durability, it would yield but a paltry sum towards anything like a fair compensation for such a public benefit."

THE BUILDERS' BENEVOLENT INSTITUTION.—We are glad to perceive that the list of stewards for the anniversary dinner, which it has now been resolved to hold on the 19th inst., in place of the 18th ult., is still on the increase, more especially by the addition of names whose weight is of greater moment than even their number. Our desires, however, on this point are not very easy to satisfy, and we therefore still exhort every one of our influential metropolitan builders who has not yet found time to add his own name to the list, forthwith to do so. They do not overlook the fact, we hope, that this is in truth the workman's cause no less than the cause of the master—nay, in the latter respect even, it is but the cause of the unfortunate master who has been reduced to the poverty of the workman himself, so that this is peculiarly the workman's cause—a cause which at this moment demands that every iron shall be thrust in the fire, to solder and amend those evils which otherwise threaten the entire disintegration of the social relationship between master and workmen. And that a BUILDERS' charitable institution is, above all, important in the present crisis, we have only to look to the deplorable state of our continental neighbours to be but too well assured. In their struggling, sinking death-grip, what are all straining after for the physical and temporal salvation of the unemployed of every class, but BUILDING—BUILDING—PUBLIC WORKS. So is it in France, where master builders are henceforth to be in the ascendant for behoof of the starving multitude. So is it in Austria: so is it in Prussia. Let our British builders, then, have the noble merit of themselves, in their own especial sphere, taking voluntary and exemplary part in preventive measures for the general behoof, while their foreign brethren, already in the midst of ruin, are only now being beseeched and enforced by their respective Governments, to take part in measures desperately remedial of ruin already consummated. The Builders' Benevolent Institution is capable of doing an immensity of good, and it only awaits the laying of a strong and sufficient foundation of class influence, and the preparation of abundance of the good strong mortar of cash to enable it to rear a firm and goodly building in the eyes of the world, even out of a host of poor decayed and broken bricks.

PAYNE'S PRESERVATIVE PROCESS FOR TIMBER.—Leaving out of sight the question of who really invented and brought to perfection the mode of preserving timber called Payne's process, concerning which we were once called on to speak, it appears to be a patent of considerable value, available with usefulness to a much larger extent than it has been yet applied. The chief object is, by filling the pores of the wood with an indissoluble substance by means of exhaustion and pressure, to preserve it from rot and the attacks of insects. Beyond this, however, the process is said to make the timber unflammable, and a few days ago some experiments on a large scale were made on the patentee's premises in Westminster, which appeared fully to bear out the statement. Two model-houses were subjected to the action of ignited shavings; one of unprepared timber was destroyed, while the other, formed of timber which had been impregnated, remained little injured.

PASSAGE OF GUARDS ALONG TRAINS IN TRANSIT.—Sir: A constant reader of your valuable journal would feel gratified by your deeming this accompanying plan for a safety railway carriage worthy of notice. Many advantages, I conceive, might be possessed in point of safety by carriages founded upon the principle proposed, and, perhaps, should you favour the suggestion with a corner, more competent persons than the writer would consider it further.—I am, &c., G.S.

* The plan proposed by our correspondent consists of a division of each carriage, along the middle of the interior, by a transverse passage 2 feet wide, into two compartments, with seats diagonally arranged, so as to be somewhat longer than if they met right across the passage, while the angular corners are set apart and inclosed for luggage. The plan is simple, and appears to possess convenience and other advantages too, besides means of safety.